

SARL NEWS - SUNDAY 11 JANUARY 2009

You are listening to ZS6SRL, the official Radio Station of the South African Radio League, the National Body for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin transmitted every Sunday at 08:15 CAT in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English. To listen to a webstream, visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links for details. PLEASE NOTE: for audio via Echolink, connect to ZS0JPL-R.

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Your news reader this morning is (name), (call sign), on 145,725 and 7,066 MHz from Pretoria, with relays on 28,325, 14,235, 10,130, 7,066 and 3,695 MHz SSB, as well as 51,400, 438,825 and 1 296 MHz FM in the Pretoria area. (Other newsreaders please change to suit).

In the news today:

HAVE YOU BOOKED FOR A PIC PROGRAMMING COURSE?

NAMIBIAN VHF DX-PEDITION AND EME CONTACTS

SARL MEMBERSHIP

FIRST 2009 PRESIDENT'S NET

You are listening to ZS6SRL. Stay tuned for more detail on these, and other important and interesting news items.

HAVE YOU BOOKED FOR A PIC PROGRAMMING COURSE?

As part of the SARL Radio Technology in Action programme, the SARL is presenting a PIC programming course in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town. The dates are as follows:

Durban: Saturday 21 February at the Durban Amateur Radio Centre; Gauteng: Saturday 7 March at the NARC; Cape Town: Saturday 14 March at Tyger Terraces, Tyger Waterfront in Durbanville.

Bookings for these courses have opened. The Durban one is already 50% subscribed. Each course is limited to 20 persons.

The fee for the course is R200 for SARL members and R300 for non-members. If your PC does not have a true serial port, a USB programmer is required. It is available to course attendants only at R235.

The fee includes the following: Tuition, required software on a CD, a demonstration board with a PIC, a programmer to download your programs to the PIC, all parts and two project boards from a selection of 10 as well as light refreshments. The course runs from 09:00 - 14:00.

All course participants will also receive a certificate from Microchip.

Visit the SARL RTA website for full details and instructions on how to book. You will find it at www.sarl.org.za, select activities and then click on RTA.

NAMIBIAN VHF DX-PEDITION LOGGED 89 EME CONTACTS ON FIRST NIGHT

The DXpedition is operating with the call of V5/KT6Q and the first contact was made in the early evening on 8 January at around 18:15 local time by the KT6Q license holder Dan, HB9CRQ, with his large EME station back home, HB9Q. Operation continued through the night until 4 in the morning when the moon finally sank into the Atlantic. When the activities of the day were totaled there were 89 contacts in the log which included Glenn, ZS2GK, near Umtata. With no access to previous statistics this is a remarkable feat of EME operation from a relatively small portable station. Although most stations contacted were in Europe and Asiatic Russia, they were scattered among 27 DXCC entities which also included Japan, Canada and the U.S.A.

The Diaz Point location can only be described as perfect but not everything was a great start. The first priority was the 144 MHz station and the four Yagi antenna array mounted on the trailer. At the same time the 144 MHz station was being assembled and tested but when the time came for a “Smoke Test” they got just that, smoke, as the weary FT-736R of ZS6WB produced clouds of it. After a bit of equipment chopping and changing the IC-910, that had been destined for 432 MHz, was pressed into service and the 144 MHz station was ready to be put into operation just after moonrise, late Thursday afternoon.

Them team was assured that reliable power was available at Diaz Point but this turned out to be completely untrue and it was necessary to rent a generator capable of handling their power requirements. This of course has added an additional burden to the budget that is already stretched well past the breaking point.

Visit www.sarl.org.za for the full story.

SARL MEMBERSHIP KEEPS GROWING

On Thursday last week the SARL membership stood at 1 370. With your support we should soon overtake the 1 400 mark. This week we welcome

ZR1GCP, Trevor Phillips; ZR1CS, Colbrin Sieberhagen; ZR2CR, Colette Rundle; ZS6AKU, Dirk Els; ZS6SUE, Sue Blackburn.

Membership for the next 6 months, till the end of June 2009, will only cost you R170. This offer is also available to members who failed to renew in July 2008, however their joining date will be recorded as January 2009. Members joining now will receive a renewal notice for the 2009/2010 year during May this year.

NEXT PRESIDENT’S NET ON 25 JANUARY 2009

Join the SARL President, Rassie Erasmus, ZS1YT, on 25 January for the President’s net. Rassie will be joined by Councillors and review details of the SARL

National Convention to be held in Cape Town from 24 to 26 April, the latest position on PLT and an update on the ICASA process to make the expanded 40 metre band available from end of March.

Clubs are invited to link their local repeaters to the network. Send details of the repeater and telephone number to be linked to armi@sarl.org.za. The information is needed by not later than 20 January when the conference call booking has to be made.

FIELD STATIONS PREPARING FOR THE PEARS VHF/UHF CONTEST

The PEARS National VHF/UHF Contest will take place next weekend. This is a 44 hour dual session contest for both analogue and digital modes. The first 22 hour session starts at 18:00 SAST on Friday 16 January, and runs until 16:00 SAST on Saturday 17 January. The second session runs from 16:01 SAST on Saturday until 14:00 SAST on Sunday 18 January.

There are categories for fixed station, field station, mult-op/club stations and a limited category for those operators who for any reason cannot operate the whole contest.

Full details of the contest have been posted on the PEARS website, www.zs2pe.co.za, the SARL VHF Forum and the zsvhf mailman list.

We have been informed that a number of field stations are going to be established in the Eastern and Western Cape. Field stations are usually very active over the full period of the contest; it is like combining Amateur Radio and camping resulting in a real fun time for all!

The contest will cover the VHF bands, 50, 70 and 144 MHz as well as 432 and 1 296 MHz on UHF. Both Analogue and Digital transmission modes will be encouraged.

Tropo propagation could provide long distance contacts in the early mornings and also in the late evenings, while Sporadic-E propagation could appear in the mornings and sometimes even in the afternoons. Look for Meteor Scatter contacts an hour or more before and after sunrise.

This is a wonderful time to test your operating skills and the efficiency of your equipment.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the expected solar activity will be very low. The geomagnetic field is expected to be at quiet levels. The expected Effective Sun Spot number for the coming week will be less than 5.

15 and 20 m will provide best opportunities for DX. There is a possibility of 10, 15 and 20 m openings towards India from about 12:00 CAT. Short contacts with New Zealand are going to be possible on 15 m at 08:00. At 8:00 and at 14:00 weak 20 m contacts may be possible with Australia. Contacts with Peru are going to be highly unlikely. Brazil may be worked on 20 m from 19:00. At

18:00 there may be short, weak 20 m openings towards Europe. Contacts with the USA East Coast are possible on 15 m from 18:00.

10 MHz is looking promising late afternoon and after dark for the CW and digital enthusiasts.

Local conditions are going to be good on 40 m during the day time. 80 m may perform well during the early mornings and late afternoons over the shorter distances, e.g. between ZS5 and ZS6. 30 m may perform well during the middle of the day between ZS6 and ZS1. Even 20 m may perform well over the longer distances before morning tea time.

80 m is the frequency of choice in the evenings. With summer here the thunderstorms and static discharge noise may cause contacts to be a bit challenging.

Remember that this is only a prediction and that HF has the capability to pleasantly surprise you in the new year, but you will never know unless you switch your rig on, listen and also call CQ.

Please visit www.spaceweather.co.za for further information.

DIARY OF EVENTS

11 January Hunting Lions on the Air still on; 16 to 18 January PEARS VHF-/UHF-competition; 25 January President's Net; 31 January Last day for submission of motions and agenda items for 2009 SARL AGM; During January Submit your nominations for SARL awards; 15 February closing date for Tinus Lange award entries; 21 February PIC course in Durban.

SARL News invites clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners. Submit news items if possible in both English and Afrikaans to www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp, not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

The SARL also invites you to listen to the programme Amateur Radio Mirror International, on the air every Sunday morning at 10:00 CAT on 145,750 MHz in the Pretoria area, with relays on 7 082, 7 205 and 17 860 kHz note this change in frequency. For the webstream and Echolink by ZS6FCS, visit www.sarl.org.za, click on 'ARMI' and follow the links. Reception through PODCAST is also available. A repeat transmission can be heard Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz. Sentech sponsors the ARMI transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a bulletin of the South African Radio League, which was compiled by George, ZS6NE.

Thank you for having listened, 73.

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